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ABSTRACT

An alternative sociology course is described that links student computer skills with available social survey data. The students, at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, have primarily technical and scientific interests, and the goal of the sociology courses offered is to promote awareness of the social world they will live and work in. Students are given access to a file of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programs that they can easily modify to suit their own purposes. Using data from the General Social Survey stored in the computer, they can test hypotheses on current data reflecting their interests. Students write short papers on their projects. In one semester the average student used about $59 worth of computer time. It was found that while students complained of the heavy workload, they also found working with real data very interesting, and no student had difficulty with the computer work, which was simplified for the purposes of the course. It is felt that helping students in such a technological setting realize that sociological data can be useful for making decisions and solving problems is valuable. Appended to the report are: descriptive materials about the General Social Survey and its coverage, a listing of SPSS programs, procedures for using the General Social Survey, class exercises, and a copy of the survey form. (MSE)

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INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY WITH SPSS AND THE GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY

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May 1981

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INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY WITH SPSS AND THE GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to describe an alternative sociology course that links student computer skills with available social survey data. Students are given access to a file of SPSS programs which they can easily modify to fit their own purposes. Using the General Social Survey they can test hypotheses on current data reflecting their interests. The broad range of data allows beginning students with little or no previous computer experience to investigate a wide variety of topics.

The purpose of this teaching experiment was to develop a sociology course that linked student computer skills with available social survey data. The challenge was to create a course that introduced students to existing social science data without requiring extensive programming experience from students or faculty. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was an excellent vehicle for accomplishing this task.

THE SETTING

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute students are primarily scientists, engineers, architects, and managers. Almost all are from the top tenth of their graduating class and all but 5 per cent graduate with at least one computing course.* The emphasis tends to be upon using the computer for "number crunching" and "making it" in industry. As graduates, these students will work in a world where nearly every decision -- to build a nuclear reactor, splice genes, or install an artificial body organ -- has human and social dimensions. In this context the goal of sociology courses is to make these students aware of themselves as social beings and of the social world their technological fixes will affect (Ellison, 1978).

Among the computing facilities available to R.P.I. students, is an IBM 370 model 3033 with 8 megabytes of main storage. The computer uses the Michigan Terminal System (MTS) as an operating system. The editing facilities of MTS allow for full screen editing. Statistical software on the system includes the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 8).

*In the R.P.I. class of 1984 are 74.6% from the top tenth of their high school class and 99.3% from the top half. The Scholastic Aptitute Test score average for these students is: Mathematics 694, Verbal 578.

The R.P.I. library purchases the General Social Survey from the Roper Center. These data come from personal interviews administered to national samples of about 1500 adults using a standard questionnaire appearing every year or every other year. Current data run from 1972 to 1980. The chief purpose of the General Social Survey is to measure trends on a wide-range of attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics (see Appendix A for detailed description).

PROCEDURE FOR USING THE GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY

Since it is not a computer programming course, the challenge was to design a system that permitted the students to use SPSS programs without having to write them or use the SPSS manual. This was accomplished by storing in the instructor's account a selection of sample SPSS programs that allow students to do all of the exercises (see Appendix B for a listing of the programs). In order to use these SPSS programs the student merely copies the program that he or she will use into a temporary file (see Appendix C for Procedure). Using the visual mode, the program can be edited to include the variables each student is interested in, by substituting new variable labels. Then the student merely runs the program to produce the results.

In the first part of the course the most recent General Social Survey is placed in a file. The format allows the data to be referred to by an appropriate label simplifying access considerably. About two-thirds of the way through the course, the earliest GSS (1972) is added to the file so that students can compare early data with current data. Also, at R.P.I. we have the capability of adding any additional years students may request.

THE WRITTEN EXERCISES

The introductory sociology course is organized on a 15 week calendar, corresponding to about 15 separate topics. Depending upon the instructor, the readings for these topics may come from standard text books or collections of articles and chapters. Because R.P.I. emphasizes writing and speaking in its curriculum, and because we have small sections of 20-30 students, we are able to require written work. In my version of the course, an exercise is assigned to each chapter (see Appendix D) and the grade is based upon any 10 written exercises.

In the first classroom assignment I try to familiarize the students with the codebook for the General Social Survey. The codebook contains the frequency distributions to all the questions asked from 1972 through 1980. Students who do well in the course become very familiar with the contents of the codebook. For the first assignment, they fell out a questionnaire patterned after the GSS interview schedule (see Appendix E). By thinking about these questions themselves, students become aware of what data are available. They are asked (a) to give a personal answer, (b) to estimate the frequency for the American population, and (c) to compare his/her personal answer with the actual distribution in the codebook. Forcing the students to confront the actual data on such issues as pre-marital sex, abortion, euthanasia, suicide, gun control, drugs, violence, defense spending, the environment, etc., allows them to compare their opinions with the opinions of the American public. When a student's response differs greatly from the responses of others, she/he is forced to ask "why" and explain the discrepancy. R.P.I. students learn, rather quickly, that not everyone in this country thinks like a white surbanite from the northeast. They must confront one of the important lessons of introductory sociology namely that our attitudes are related to our social, economic, and cultural

backgrounds.

Once students become familiar with the GSS, they are encouraged to write descriptive papers: Are values commonly shared? Do Americans support their social institutions? What does a cultural group share in common? Usually a student will approach the data asking personal or existentially relevant questions.

A female engineering student, from a large Catholic family, compared Catholic families with few (0-2) children, some (3-5) children, and many (6-8) children. In spite of a traditional ideology describing Catholic families as "large, happy, close-knit," she discovered that the small Catholic families were happier than the general population, while the larger Catholic families were not as happy.

A freshman investigated the American myth that anyone can go from rags to riches. By comparing a respondent's occupational prestige with the prestige of the respondent's father's occupation, he was able to demonstrate that this is very unlikely and it certainly helps to be wealthy.

Later on, in the course, students are asked to make predictions (hypotheses) about the behavior of certain groups and then to test them using actual data. Again, students have to confront the fact that their own value systems determine the kinds of predictions they make.

A student from a rural Vermont farm background made some predictions comparing large city professionals and persons from small towns and farmers. To her surprise the two groups did not differ on percent married, religious attendance or political convictions. Contrary to her predictions she found the professional to be happier. The only prediction that was confirmed was that small town and farm families had more children. This encounter with the GSS encouraged this young woman to become aware of how her own background and the agrarian myth influenced her social expectations.

An oriental student, majoring in computer science, compared young people (ages 20-29) with high prestige jobs to older persons (ages 50-69) with low prestige jobs. The contrasts between these two groups reflect the conflicts she experiences in her own family, where parents have low prestige but sacrificed to provide excellent educations for their children.

These written exercises, using the GSS, permit students to investigate questions that are personally interesting and existentially relevant. They achieve some sense of their own value systems relative to the values of the larger population as well as significant groups in the society. At an introductory level, they begin to understand the difficult problems of defining, measuring, and using sociological concepts as well. As with most systems that are educationally useful, there are related costs.

COSTS

Any course with written exercises requires a considerable amount of instructor's time, reading and commenting on papers. Twenty students writing ten papers each produce 200 three-to-five page papers. That can be alot of work but is an advantage of small classes and a private university.

Computer costs will obviously vary by the number of students in the course.

Computer costs involved in running the course for one semester are:

disk rental (for storing GSS data in files available to students)	
disk (4096 BYTES) space required:	
10 weeks @ 1535 pages	$293.42
4 weeks @ 2658 pages	$241.95
tape storage	
GSS tape @ $2.50/month	$ 12.50
tape rental (for storing files used in the course between semesters) @ $2.50/month	$ 2.50
computing time: (rate varies)	
to develop files for the course	$151.56
to audit student accounts	$ 11.15
for student computing (17 student) average/student = $58.86	$1000.65
TOTAL COST IN FALL 1980	$1713.73

Each student received a separate account with $25 of computing time and this was increased in amounts of $15 as was needed. In the Fall, 1980 semester, the average student used about $59 worth of computing time.

CONCLUSIONS

While the students complained that the course was alot of work, they found the idea of working with real data about actual people, very interesting. In a technological setting, like Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, it is important for students to realize that sociological data can be useful for making decisions and solving problems. With the system of storing SPSS programs in a file to be copied and modified by the student, access to the data is simple and no student had difficulty. While there are obvious monetary and instructor costs, these must be weighed against the educational benefits.

REFERENCES

David L. Ellison. THE BIO-MEDICAL FIX. The Human Dimensions of Bio-medical Technologies. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1978.

APPENDIX A

*National Opinion Research Center (NORC) General Social Survey**

The NORC General Social Survey data come from personal interviews administered to national samples of about 1500 adults using a standard questionnaire with identical questions appearing every year or every other year. Surveys were conducted each spring from 1972 through 1978, and funding is available for two additional surveys in 1980 and 1982. Since some of the baseline items are repeated from surveys going back to the early 1950's, selected trend comparisons can be made for the entire post World War II period.

The chief purposes of the General Social Survey are to measure trends on a wide-range of attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics and to provide up-to-date, high-quality, relevant data for social scientists. Among more than 400 variables are a full range of demographics; behavioral questions on socializing, group memberships, smoking and drinking, victimization, and television viewing; and attitude questions on personal satisfaction, financial and occupational evaluations, abortions, crime control, suicide, race relations, and civil liberties. The topics in detail are listed on the next page. The 1972-78 data are available from THE ROPER CENTER in an SPSS SYSTEM FILE compatible with our IBM computer for $165.

These data are used regularly by social science researchers as the following sampling of articles of articles illustrates:

Jon P. Alston, "A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Church Attendance Patterns in the United States and France," International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 16 (Fall, 1975), pp. 268-280.

Amitai Etzioni and Clyde Nunn, "The Public Appreciation of Science in Contemporary America," Daedelus (Summer, 1974), pp. 191-205.

Robert M. Hauser, Peter J. Dickinson, Harry P. Travis, and John N. Koffel, "Structural Changes in Occupational Mobility among Men in the United States," American Sociological Review, 40 (October, 1975).

Jonathan Kelley, "The Politics of School Busing," Public Opinion Quarterly (Spring, 1974), pp. 23-39.

Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., and Charles D. Hadley, Transformation of the American Party System: Political Coalitions from the New Deal to the 1970's, New York: Norton, 1975.

James D. Wright and Sonia R. Wright, "Social Class and Parental Values for Children: A Partial Replication and Extension of the Kohn Thesis," American Sociological Review, 41 (June, 1976).

Clearly the General Social Survey funded by NSF provides the basic data for students to learn about sociological concepts, their measurement, and their correlates.

**Excerpted from NORC Descriptive Materials*

What topics do the surveys cover?

The GSS is deliberately eclectic in its content. A wide range of demographics, behavioral measures, and attitude items are included. These are repeated either every survey or appear on a rotating pattern. In the following outline, the major topics covered are mentioned. In parentheses are the years in which the question was asked.

I. Ecology

- Region at age 16 (2-8)
- Size of place at age 16 (2-8)
- Mobility, geographic (2-8)
- Size of place, region (2-8)

II. Family and Life Cycle

A. Age
- Year of birth (2-8)

B. Marriage and family structure
- Family at age 16 (2-8)
- Age at first marriage(2-8)
- Ever divorced
- Marital status (2-8)
- Household composition (2-8)
- Marital happiness (3-8)
- Care of elderly (3,5,6,8)
- Divorce laws (4,5,7,8)

C. Sex
- Sex of R (2-8)
- Seen X-rated film (3,5,6,8)
- Attitude toward pornography (3,5,6,8)
- Homosexuality (3,4,6,7)
- Adultery (3,4,6,7)
- Pre-marital sex (2,4,5,7,8)
- Birth control (4,5,7)
- Sex education (4,5,7)
- Sex roles in working (2,4,5,7,8)
- Sex roles in politics (2,4,5,7,8)

D. Children and fertility
- Number of siblings (2-8)
- Number of children (2-8)
- Children expected (2,4,5,7,8)
- Ideal number of children (2,4,5,7,8)
- Quality of children (3,5,6,8)
- Abortions (2-8)

III. Socioeconomic Status

A. Labor force
- Mother's employment (3-8)
- Father's occupation + industry, prestige rank (2-8)
- Ever employed (2-8)
- Spouse ever employed (2-8)
- Veteran status (4,5,7,8)
- R's employment status (2-8)
- R's occupation + industry and prestige rank (2-8)
- R's hours worked (3-8)
- Spouse's employment status (2-8)
- Spouse's occupation + industry and prestige rank (2-8)
- Spouse's hours worked (3-8)
- Level of supervision (2-4,6,7)
- Job security (7,8)
- Job satisfaction (2-8)
- Occupational values - income, security, hours, advancement, importance (3,4,6,7)
- Work, if rich (3,4,6,7)
- Getting ahead (3,4,6,7)

B. Education
- Father's education (2-8)
- Mother's education (2-8)
- Spouse's education (2-8)
- R's education (2-8)
- Vocabulary test (4,6,8)
- Confidence in education (3-8)
- Spending for education (3-8)

C. Income
- Relative income of parents (2-8)
- Family income (2-8)
- R's income (4-8)
- Relative income (2-8)
- Unemployment, welfare (3-8)
- Changes in income (2-8)
- Financial satisfaction (2-8)
- Spending on welfare (2-8)

D. Class
- Subjective social class (2-8)
- Union membership (3,5,6,8)
- Confidence in business, labor (3-8)

IV. Primordial Groups

A. Ethnicity
- Nativity (7-8)
- Country of origin (2-8)

B. Religion
- Religion R raised in (3-8)
- Current religion (2-8)
- Church attendance (2-8)
- Religious intensity (4-8)
- Religion spouse raised in (3-8)
- Current religion, spouse (3-8)
- Life after death (3,5,6,8)
- Confidence in religion (3-8)
- Tolerance of Atheists (2,4,6,7)
- Prayer in schools (4,5,7,8)

C. Race
- R's race (2-8)
- Blacks in neighborhood (2-8)
- Black friend for dinner (3,4,6,7)
- Blacks shouldn't push (2,3,5,6,8)
- School integration (2,4,5,7,8)
- Black for President (2,4,5,7,8)
- Open housing law (3,5,6,8)

C. (Cont.)
- Intermarriage law (2,3,4,6,7)
- Busing (2,4,5,7,8)
- Spending for Blacks (3-8)

V. Politics

A. Domestic
- Presidential vote (2-8)
- Party preference (2-8)
- Ideology (4,5,7,8)
- Confidence in leaders (3-8)
- National spending (3-8)
- Income tax (6,7)
- Tolerance of Communists (2,3,4,6,7)
- Tolerance of Socialists (2,3,4)
- Tolerance of racists (6,7)
- Tolerance of militarists (6,7)

B. International
- Expectations of war (3,5,6,8)
- Isolationism (3,5,6,8)
- United Nations (3,5,6,8)
- Attitudes toward countries (4,5,7)
- Communism (3,4,6,7)
- Confidence in military (3-8)

VI. Social Psychology

A. Interaction
- Group memberships (4,5,7,8)
- Sociability (4,5,7,8)

B. Morale
- Misanthropy scale (2,3,5,6,8)
- Srole anomia scale (3,4,6,7)
- Happiness (2-8)
- Satisfaction with job, finance (2-8)
- Satisfaction with city, family, friends, health, hobbies (3-8)
- Exciting life (3,4,6,7)
- Suicide (7,8)

VII. Other

A. Crime, punishment, and violence
- Ever beaten (3,5,6,8)
- Ever threatened with gun (3,5,6,8)
- Robbed (3,4,6,7)
- Burglarized (3,4,6,7)
- Arrested (3,4,6,7)
- Demonstrations (3)

A. (Cont.)
- Approve of hitting (3,5,6,8)
- Approve of police hitting (3,5,6,8)
- Fear of walking at night (3,4,6,7)
- Gun permit (2-8)
- Severity of courts (2-8)
- Capital punishment
- Marijuana (3,5,6,8)
- Wiretapping (4,5,7,8)

B. Health
- Health level (2-7)
- Satisfaction with health (3-8)
- Euthanasia (7,8)

C. Leisure
- Hunting (7)
- Satisfaction with hobbies (3-8)

D. Miscellaneous
- TV viewing (5,7,8)
- Newspaper reading (2,5,7)
- Smoking (7,8)
- Drinking (7,8)
- R's understanding of terms (2-8)
- R's cooperation (2-8)

```
  FREQUENCIES

  1        GET FILE        GSS78(A9UB:GSS78)
  2        FREQUENCIES     GENERAL=USWAR,USINTL,COMMUN,RELIG,ATTEND,POSTLIFE,
  3                        HAPPY TO HEALTH, DRINK TO SMOKE.
  4                        PREMARSX,XMARSEX,LETDIE1,SUICIDE1 TO SUICIDE4
  5        STATISTICS      1
  6        FINISH
END OF FILE

  RECODE

  1        GET FILE        GSS78(A9UB:GSS78)
  2        *RECODE         OCC (1 THRU 99=0) (100 THRU 199=1) (200 THRU 299=2)
  3                        (300 THRU 399=3) (400 THRU 499=4) (500 THRU 599=5)
  4                        (600 THRU 699=6) (700 THRU 799=7) (800 THRU 899=8)
  5                        (900 THRU 999=9)
  6        FREQUENCIES     GENERAL=OCC
  7        STATISTICS      1
  8        FINISH
END OF FILE

  XTABS

  1        GET FILE        GSS78(A9UB:GSS78)
  2        CROSSTABS       TABLES=RACE BY RELIG,
  3        STATISTICS      1
  4        FINISH
END OF FILE

  XTABOPTIONS

  1        GET FILE        GSS78(A9UB:GSS78)
  2        CROSSTABS       TABLES=RELIG BY DRINK,DRUNK,
  3                        SUICIDE1 TO SUICIDE4,ABDEFECT,
  4                        LETDIE1
  5        OPTIONS         4,5
  6        STATISTICS      1
  7        FINISH
END OF FILE
```

```
  SELECTGROUP1

  1        GET FILE         GSS78(A9UB:GSS78)
  2        SELECT IF        (DENOM16 EQ 1 OR 2 OR 4 OR 5) AND (RACE EQ 1 OR 2
  3        IF               (RACE EQ 1 AND DENOM16 EQ 4 OR 5) CULTURE=1
  4        IF               (RACE EQ 2 AND DENOM16 EQ 1 OR 2) CULTURE=2
  5        ASSIGN MISSING   CULTURE  (0)
  6        VALUE LABELS     CULTURE  (1) WHPROT (2) BLPROT (0) OTHERS
  7        CROSSTABS        TABLES=CULTURE BY LETDIE1
  8        OPTIONS          4,5
  9        STATISTICS       1
 10        FINISH
END OF FILE

  SELECTGROUP2

  1        GET FILE         GSS78(A9UB:GSS78)
  2        SELECT IF        (DENOM16 EQ 1 OR 2 OR 4 OR 5) AND (RACE EQ 1 OR 2
  3        IF               (RACE EQ 1 AND DENOM16 EQ 4 OR 5) CULTURE=1
  4        IF               (RACE EQ 2 AND DENOM16 EQ 1 OR 2) CULTURE=2
  5        ASSIGN MISSING   CULTURE (0)
  6        VALUE LABELS     CULTURE (1) WHPRCT (2) BLPROT (0) OTHERS
  7        CROSSTABS        TABLES=CULTURE BE LETDIE1
  8        OPTIONS          4,5
  9        STATISTICS       1
 10        FINISH
END OF FILE
```

PROCEDURE FOR USING THE GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY

COMMANDS	COMMENTS
SIGNONID	SIGN ON, USING YOUR IDENTIFICATION. ENTER YOUR PASSWORD (WILL NOT APPEAR ON SCREEN).
COPY A9UB:XTABS -B	IN THIS EXAMPLE, YOU WANT TO RUN A CROSS-TABULATION. YOU COPY THE XTABS MODEL, LOCATED IN MY FILE (A9UB), INTO A TEMPORARY FILE (-B).
EDIT -B V	NOW YOU CAN CHANGE THE FILE (-B), USING THE VISUAL MODE. AFTER MAKING YOUR CHANGES, PRESS THE PA2 KEY TO RECORD THOSE CHANGES AND GET OUT OF THE VISUAL MODE.
LIST -B	THIS ALLOWS YOU TO LOOK AT THE FILE (-B) TO MAKE SURE ALL CHANGES ARE CORRECT.
RUN *SPSS 5=-B 6=-C	THIS RUNS YOUR CROSS-TABULATION PROGRAM (-B), AND PLACES THE RESULTS IN ANOTHER TEMPORARY FILE (-C).
EDIT -C V	THIS ALLOWS YOU TO LOOK AT YOUR RESULTS. PRESS PF4 KEY TO MOVE FORWARD THROUGH THE FILE. PF1 KEY MOVES BACKWARD.
LIST -C *PRINT*	ONCE YOU HAVE DECIDED YOUR RESULTS ARE ADEQUATE, THIS COMMAND ALLOWS YOU TO RECEIVE A PRINT-OUT. THE COMPUTER WILL ASSIGN YOUR PRINT-OUT A NUMBER (SIX DIGITS) THAT IDENTIFIES YOUR MATERIAL. PICK IT UP AT THE COMPUTER CENTER.

EXERCISES

Do the equivalent of 10 exercises, only. Plan ahead. After March 14th exercises for chapters 1-8, will not be accepted. When appropriate, attach the computer out-put for your exercise.

DUE DATE

January 26 — CHAPTER 2 - SCIENCE AND METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

After you have filled out the NORC-GSS questionnaire and read chapter two, look for items on which your answers differ a great deal from the actual percentages for the American population.

a) describe the differences
b) try to explain why your answer differed from a sociological perspective. What is there in your social background that leads you to have your biases?

February 2 — CHAPTER 3 - SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Durkheim suggests that three factors hold a society together:

1) the "presence of a commonly held, commonly shared structure of goals and values"
2) "The institutions of the society must be held by the people they serve to have a kind of moral authority, willingly accepted, as distinct from naked power."
3) "an unconfused sense of self held by the individuals who make up the society" (Yankelovich, 1979).

From the General Social Survey, select one variable that might help you decide whether at least one of these factors exists in American society. (You might want to look at 108A,E,F; 117A-M; or anything you can justify). What is the frequency distribution of your variable? (include percentages) What do these data tell you about the social structure of American Society? Are values commonly shared? Do Americans support their social institutions? Do they have an unconfused sense of self? Write a brief explanation.

(Appropriate SPSS commands are located under user identification, A9UB. Their names are FREQUENCIES, and RECODE).

February 9 — CHAPTER 4 - CULTURE

The general category that determines a cultural group may vary. It may be possible to classify groups of people with a common culture by religion, race, nationality, age, sex, social class, status community, region of the nation, etc.

a) Describe a combination of characteristics that you believe defines a group of people sharing a common culture. Make a hypothesis about what that group should share in common.
b) Using the GSS, sort out this group of people and test your hypothesis by running a cross-tabulation(s) with some other variable(s).
c) What can you interpret from your results? Does group affiliation influence a person's point of view or outlook on the world?

(Appropriate SPSS commands are located under user identification, A9UB. Their names are XTABS, SELECTGROUP1, SELECTGROUP2).

DUE DATE

February 16 — CHAPTER 5 - SOCIALIZATION

Select a value, belief, or behavior pattern (118 desirable qualities for a child, 147 abortion, 162 sucide, 78 marijuana, 60 liberal - conservative, 122 drinking) from the GSS. Using your sociological knowledge make a hypothesis about a cultural group who's socialization experience would create high consensus (how will you define "high consensus"?). Do you need to limit your cultural group to people in the same age bracket? Explain your results.

SPSS commands include XTABS, SELECTGROUP1. SELECTGROUP2).

February 23 — CHAPTER 6 - SEX ROLES

Can you discover any differences between males and females (20)? Or can you discover any differences between employed females and housewives (1)? What other variables make a difference (9 - age; 3 - marital status; 16 - degree)? Do they differ on 110 - marital happiness, 142-146 attitudes toward women, 153-154 divorce, 155 pre-marital sex, 156 - extra marital sex, 184 abortion, 186 women and careers, 187 - ERA, 188 - children, 189 - women's career, etc. Make a hypothesis about what you expect to find, run your cross-tabulations, and explain your results.

(SPSS commands include XTABS, SELECTGROUP1, SELECTGROUP2).

March 2 — CHAPTER 7 - SOCIAL GROUPS

Ferdinand Tonnies described Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft as kinds of communities. Durkheim, talking about the social bonds that characterized the relationships of people from these communities, used the terms mechanical and organic solidarity. By using question 22 (RES16=place you were living when you were 16), or question 49(XNORCSIZ), 50(SRCBELT), 51(SIZE=size of place); can you discover people with different attitudes about human relationships? Make some hypothesis, run the cross-tabulations and explain your results.

March 9 — CHAPTER 8 - ORGANIZATIONS AND BUREAUCRACY

Select one of the following:

A) Two theories about human workers are discussed in your book (pages 223-225).

> "Theory X is based on the assumption that people hate work, seek to avoid responsibility, and must therefore, be coerced into doing anything productive . . . Theory Y sees people as anxious to be creative and to assume responsibility, and therefore as only too happy to work under the right circumstances." (p. 223, L&K).

Do a or b.

a) Using GSS data, can you make some statements about which Theory is most appropriaté?

b) Using GSS data, can you describe which kinds of workers might fit in one or the other theory?

Questions 53A-F, 121E, 124C, 127-131, 134, 136-141 might be appropriate. You are encouraged to use your ingenuity.

B) Are there real differences between persons who work with data (53A), people (53B), and things (53C)? What do your findings suggest about the nature of work?

EXERCISES FOR CHAPTERS 1-8 WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER MARCH 14th.

DUE DATE

March 23 — CHAPTER 9 - DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Select one of the following:

a) Using the GSS78 data, can you define a group of people who are deviant? Explain why the indicator you select is a good measure. What are the demographic characteristics of this deviant group? Do these characteristics help you understand their deviant behavior?

b) Using the GSS78 data, can you identify victims of violence (164-165, 169, 170), people who approve violence (166-167), people who own guns (171-GSS77). What are the demographic characteristics of one of these groups? Do these characteristics help you understand their behavior?

c) Using the GSS77 data, can you identify people who have been accused of breaking the law (171,172)? What are their demographic charateristics? What do your results suggest about "labeling theory" (pages 244-246 in L&K).

March 30 — CHAPTER 10 - SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Select one of the following:

a) Is there any relationship between a respondent's report of social class (132) and occupational prestige (53F), general educational development (53D), degree (16), income (40)? Explain your results.

b) What is the relationship between a respondent's occupational prestige (2A) and his/her father's occupation (6A)? Explain your results. Please note 2A and 6A requires RECODE.

c) What is the relationship between a respondent's degree (16), respondent's father's degree (17), respondent's mother's degree (18), respondent's spouse's degree (19)? Does the sex (20) of the respondent make any difference? Explain your results.

d) Plot the distribution of family income in 1973(36) and 1978 (39). How could you accurately compare the two distributions? What does that comparison tell you about income inequality?

e) Who are the poor (39 Or 40)? What are their demographic characteristics? Explain your results.

April 6 — CHAPTER 13 - THE FAMILY

Can you discover any special characteristics of: (select one)

a) Respondents who around age 16 lived with mother only, father only, father and step-mother, mother and step-father, mother and father (24).

b) Respondents who are married, divorced, or never married (3).

c) Respondents who married early or late (3)

d) Working women and/or men respondents (1 and 20).

e) Respondents from a large or small household (32,8).

Make some hypothesis about the attitudes you expect your respondents to have. Give the reasoning behind your hypothesis. For example: Would you expect them to have unique attitudes about welfare (62K, 139), income differences (64), attendance at religious services (87), satisfaction with family life (116C), ideal number of children (149), divorce (153, 154), premarital sex (155), extra marital sex (156), or any other variables you feel are significant. How do you explain your results?

DUE DATE

April 13 — CHAPTER 15 - RELIGION

How do you measure a person's religion (86, 87, 88, 89, 90)? Select one of these variables as your indicator and justify your selection.

Now answer one of the following questions:

a) Is there any relation between religion and political behavior?
b) Is there any relation between religion and attitudes toward abortion, euthanasia, or suicide?
c) Is there any relation between religion and patriotism?
d) Are religious people concerned about moral, ethical, or social issues?
e) Are there regional or city-sized differences in religion?
f) Can you discover persons who see religion as a personal as compared to a social behavior?

Explain your results.

April 20 — CHAPTER 16 - POPULATION AND HEALTH

Select one of the following:

Can you demonstrate any change in the ideal number of children for a family to have (149 - CHLDIDEL) or the expectation of having more children (150 - CHLDMORE) from 1972 to 1978?

What are the demographic characteristics of respondents expecting to have no more children (150)? What are the implications of this for the future?

Develop a hypothesis about the characteristics of people who support and oppose abortion (147, 182, 183, 184 - GSS77, 185 - GSS77) or birth control (15 - GSS77) sex education (152 - GSS77) or euthanasia (161) or suicide (162). How would you use this information to change people's positions?

Who are the sick? (111-GSS77). What are their demographic characteristics? What are the implications of your results for national health insurance?

What are the demographic characteristics of people who suffer such social stresses such as divorce (198), unemployment (200), hospitalization and disability (202), death of relatives (204), total traumatic events (206, 207, 208). What social support systems could a community provide for these people?

April 27 — CHAPTER 19 - SOCIAL CHANGE AND TECHNOLOGY

In a post-industrial society, persons who work with Data (53A), may be the new knowledge brokers, the new leaders in a knowledge-based society. What are the political attitudes of these leaders? What do they think about national issues? Would you want them to lead the society?

Ellision/NSF/ 7-80
Sociology 55.1200
Spring 1981

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER

GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY

SELECTED ITEMS

DIRECTIONS: The following questions are taken from the General Social Survey.* You are to answer them as if you were a respondent being interviewed. In the first column, ME, check the category which is your answer. In the second column, AMERICANS (%), estimate what percentage of the American population you think would fall into each of the categories. Later you will use the third column, ACTUAL (%) to check your estimates.

*The General Social Survey (GSS) is administered by the National Opinion Research Center to representative national samples of about 1500 adults. The GSS measures trends on a wide-range of attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics of the American population.

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
1. Employment (WRKSTAT)			
1. Working full time	____	____	46.7
2. Working part time	____	____	9.1
3. With a job, but not at work because of	____	____	2.5
4. Unemployed, laid off, looking for work	____	____	2.5
5. Retired	____	____	10.2
6. In school	____	____	2.3
7. Keeping house	____	____	24.6
8. Other	____	____	2.0
2. Occupation (OCC)			
0, 1. Professional, technical	____	____	14.7
2. Managers, administrators, sales workers	____	____	14.3
3. Clerical and kindred workers	____	____	17.0
4, 5. Craftsmen and kindred workers	____	____	11.9
6. Operatives, except transport	____	____	13.3
7. Transport equipment operatives	____	____	5.9
8. Farmers, farm laborers	____	____	1.6
9. Service workers	____	____	12.9
2. Industry (INDUSTRY)			
0. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	____	____	8.1
1, 2, 3. Manufacturing	____	____	24.0
4. Transportation, Communications and other Public Utilities	____	____	5.4
5. Wholesale	____	____	2.5
6. Retail Trade	____	____	13.8
7. Finance, Insurance, Real Estate; Business and Reapir Services	____	____	13.8
8. Entertainment and Recreation Services, Professional and Related Services	____	____	17.4
9. Public Administration	____	____	6.6
3. Marital Status (MARITAL)			
1. Married	____	____	62.7
2. Widowed	____	____	0.0
3. Divorced	____	____	8.7
4. Separated	____	____	3.1
5. Never married	____	____	15.5
9. Age (AGE)			
1. 10-19 years of age	____	____	2.1
2. 20-29 years of age	____	____	24.5
3. 30-39 years of age	____	____	21.8
4. 40-49 years of age	____	____	14.2
5. 50-59 years of age	____	____	14.9
6. 60-69 years of age	____	____	10.8
7. 70-79 years of age	____	____	8.6
8. 80 or over	____	____	2.7
16. Education (DEGREE)			
0. Less than high school	____	____	30.7
1. High school diploma	____	____	52.5
2. Associate/Junior college degree	____	____	2.7
3. Bachelor's degree	____	____	9.9
4. Graduate	____	____	4.0

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
39. Total family income (INCOME78) in 1978 before taxes			
01. Under $1,000	____	____	1.2
02. $1,000-2,999	____	____	4.7
03. $3,000-3,999	____	____	5.4
04. $4,000-4,999	____	____	3.5
05. $5,000-5,999	____	____	4.1
06. $6,000-6,999	____	____	4.4
07. $7,000-7,999	____	____	4.0
08. $8,000-8,999	____	____	6.7
09. $10,000-12,499	____	____	9.3
10. $12,500-14,999	____	____	8.9
11. $15,000-17,499	____	____	8.7
12. $17,500-19,999	____	____	5.8
13. $20,000-22,499	____	____	6.9
14. $22,500-24,999	____	____	5.7
15. $25,000-49,999	____	____	11.8
16. $50,000 and over	____	____	2.2
56. Political preference			
0. Strong Democrat	____	____	14.1
1. Not very strong Democrat	____	____	25.4
2, 3, 4. Independent	____	____	36.2
5. Not very strong Republican	____	____	16.1
6. Strong Republican	____	____	7.2
7. Other	____	____	0.7
59A. Voted in 1976 for			
1. Carter	____	____	32.8
2. Ford	____	____	28.3
3. Other	____	____	1.0
4. Didn't vote	____	____	0.3
60. Political views			
1. Extremely liberal	____	____	1.4
2. Liberal	____	____	9.3
3. Slightly liberal	____	____	15.7
4. Moderate, middle of the road	____	____	35.8
5. Slightly conservative	____	____	17.2
6. Conservative	____	____	12.3
7. Extremely conservative	____	____	2.0

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
62. We are faced with ammy problems in this country. None of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. For each problem, I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount.			
A. Space exploration program			
1. too little	___	___	11.6
2. about right	___	___	35.0
3. too much	___	___	47.2
B. Improving and protecting the environment			
1. too little	___	___	52.3
2. about right	___	___	32.7
3. too much	___	___	9.5
C. Improving and protecting the nation's health			
1. too little	___	___	55.4
2. about right	___	___	33.7
3. too much	___	___	6.9
D. Solving the problems of the big cities			
1. too little	___	___	38.7
2. about right	___	___	29.5
3. too much	___	___	18.9
E. Halting the rising crime rate			
1. too little	___	___	64.1
2. about right	___	___	25.1
3. too much	___	___	6.1
F. Dealing with drug addiction			
1. too little	___	___	55.1
2. about right	___	___	30.9
3. too much	___	___	8.7
G. Improving the nation's education system			
1. too little	___	___	51.6
2. about right	___	___	33.9
3. too much	___	___	10.9
H. Improving the conditions of Blacks			
1. too little	___	___	24.2
2. about right	___	___	43.1
3. too much	___	___	25.1
I. The Military, armaments, and defense			
1. too little	___	___	27.0
2. about right	___	___	43.5
3. too much	___	___	21.8
J. Foreign aid			
1. too little	___	___	3.9
2. about right	___	___	23.9
3. too much	___	___	66.5
K. Welfare			
1. too little	___	___	13.0
2. about right	___	___	24.8

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
66. There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion.			
A. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community against churches and religion, should he be allowed to speak, or not?			
1. Yes, allowed to speak	____	____	62.3
2. Not allowed	____	____	37.1
3. Don't know	____	____	.6
B. Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university?			
1. Yes, allowed to teach	____	____	38.8
2. Not allowed	____	____	59.3
3. Don't know	____	____	1.9
C. If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote against churches and religion should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book?			
1. Favor	____	____	39.6
2. Not favor	____	____	58.6
3. Don't know	____	____	1.8
67. Or consider a person who favored government ownership of all the railroads and all big industries.			
A. Make a speech?			
1. Yes, allowed to speak	____	____	75.7
2. Not allowed	____	____	20.7
3. Don't know	____	____	3.6
B. Teach in a college or university?			
1. Yes, allowed to teach	____	____	57.2
2. Not allowed	____	____	37.3
3. Don't know	____	____	5.5
C. Book favoring government ownership should be taken out of your public library, would you favor?			
1. Favor	____	____	25.7
2. Not favor	____	____	69.3
3. Don't know	____	____	5.0
68. Or consider a person who believes that Blacks are genetically inferior.			
A. Make a speech?			
1. Yes, allowed to apeak	____	____	58.5
2. Not allowed	____	____	39.7
3. Don't know	____	____	1.8
B. Teach in a college or university?			
1. Yes, allowed to teach	____	____	40.8
2. Not allowed	____	____	56.6
3. Don't know	____	____	2.6
C. Book saying Blacks are inferior should be taken out of your public library, would you favor?			
1. Favor	____	____	36.3
2. Not favor	____	____	61.0
3. Don't know	____	____	2.7

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%))
69. How would you treat a man who admits he is a Communist?			
A. Make a speech?			
1. Yes, allowed to speak	____	____	55.5
2. Not allowed	____	____	42.5
3. Don't know	____	____	2.0
B. Teach in a college or university?			
1. Yes, allowed to teach	____	____	57.1
2. Not allowed			38.8
3. Don't know	____	____	4.1
C. Book should be removed from public library, would you favor?			
1. Favor	____	____	42.2
2. Not favor	____	____	55.3
3. Don't know	____	____	2.5
70. Consider a person who advocates doing away with elections and letting the military run the country.			
A. Make a speech?			
1. Yes, allowed to speak	____	____	50.5
2. Not allowed	____	____	47.7
3. Don't know	____	____	1.8
B. Teach in a college or university?			
1. Yes, allowed to teach	____	____	34.0
2. Not allowed	____	____	63.3
3. Don't know	____	____	2.6
C. Book removed from public library, would you favor?			
1. Favor	____	____	42.7
2. Not favor	____	____	54.6
3. Don't know	____	____	2.7
71. What about a man who admits he is a homosexual?			
A. Make a speech?			
1. Yes, allowed to speak	____	____	61.8
2. Not allowed	____	____	34.6
3. Don't know	____	____	3.6
B. Teaching in a college or university?			
1. Yes, allowed to teach	____	____	49.3
2. Not allowed	____	____	46.5
3. Don't know	____	____	4.2
C. Book in favor of homosexuality be removed from public library, would you favor?			
1. Favor	____	____	41.3
2. Not favor	____	____	55.3
3. Don't know	____	____	3.3

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
73. Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted or murder?			
1. Favor	____	____	66.3
2. Not favor	____	____	27.9
3. Don't know	____	____	5.8
74. Would you favor or oppose a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before he or she could buy a gun?			
1. Favor	____	____	71.6
2. Not favor	____	____	26.5
3. Don't know	____	____	1.9
77. Everything considered, would you say that, in general, you approve or disapprove of wiretapping?			
1. Approve	____	____	19.0
2. Disapprove	____	____	77.8
78. Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal or not?			
1. Should	____	____	29.2
2. Should not	____	____	66.4
3. Don't know	____	____	2.9
80. Do you expect the United States to fight in another war within the next ten years?			
1. Yes	____	____	54.0
2. No	____	____	39.9
3. Don't know	____	____	5.9
82. Do you think it will be best for the future of this country if we take an active part in world affairs, or if we stay out of world affairs?			
1. Active part	____	____	63.9
2. Stay out	____	____	32.0
3. Don't know	____	____	4.0
84. Thinking about all the different kinds of governments in the world today, which of these statements comes closest to how you feel about Communism as a form of government?			
1. It's the worst kind of all	____	____	52.6
2. It's bad, but no worse than some others	____	____	24.4
3. It's all right for some countries	____	____	19.7
4. It's a good form of government	____	____	1.4
5. Don't know	____	____	1.9
86. What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?			
1. Protestant	____	____	63.9
2. Catholic	____	____	25.1
3. Jewish	____	____	1.9
4. None	____	____	7.8
5. Other	____	____	1.1

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
87. How often do you attend religious services?			
0. Never	____	____	15.6
1. Less than once a eyar	____	____	8.7
2. About once a year	____	____	13.2
3. Several times a year	____	____	11.4
4. About once a month	____	____	6.7
5. 2-3 times a month	____	____	9.5
6. Nearly every week	____	____	7.0
7. Every week	____	____	19.5
8. Several times a week	____	____	8.0
9. No answer	____	____	0.3
89. Do you believe there is a life after death?			
1. Yes	____	____	69.8
2. No	____	____	21.2
3. Don't know	____	____	8.8
93. The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may require the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools. What are your views on this -- do you approve or disapprove of the court ruling?			
1. Approve	____	____	33.5
2. Disapprove	____	____	64.2
3. No opinion	____	____	2.3
109. Taken all together, how would you say things are these days -- would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?			
1. Very happy	____	____	34.0
2. Pretty happy	____	____	55.5
3. Not too happy	____	____	9.5
110. Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage? Would you say that your marriage is very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?			
1. Very happy	____	____	40.6
2. Pretty happy	____	____	20.6
3. Not too happy	____	____	1.6
111. Would you say your own health, in general, is excellent, good, fair, or poor?			
1. Excellent	____	____	31.8
2. Good	____	____	40.8
3. Fair	____	____	20.5
4. Poor	____	____	6.9
115. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?			
1. Most people can be trusted	____	____	38.9
2. Can't be too careful	____	____	56.5
3. Other, depends	____	____	4.3
122. Do you ever have occasion to use any alcoholic beverages such as liquor, wine, or beer, or are you a total abstainer?			
1. Use alcohol	____	____	72.3
2. Total abstainer	____	____	27.5

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
122A. If you use alcohol, do you sometimes drink more than you think you should?			
1. Yes	____	____	25.3
2. No	____	____	46.4
3. Don't know	____	____	27.5
123. Do you smoke?			
1. Yes	____	____	39.4
2. No	____	____	60.5
142. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men?			
1. Agree	____	____	30.9
2. Disagree	____	____	65.9
3. Don't know	____	____	____
143. Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her?			
1. Approve	____	____	72.3
2. Disapprove	____	____	26.2
3. Don't know	____	____	1.4
144. If your party nominated a woman for President, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?			
1. Yes	____	____	79.4
2. No	____	____	18.0
3. Wouldn't vote	____	____	____
4. Don't know	____	____	2.6
145. Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.			
1. Agree	____	____	42.0
2. Disagree	____	____	53.9
3. Not sure	____	____	4.0

	ME	AMERICANS(%)	ACTUAL(%)

147. Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if:

A. If there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby?			
1. Yes	____	____	80.1
2. No	____	____	17.6
3. Don't know	____	____	2.0
B. If she is married and does not want any more children?			
1. Yes	____	____	39.0
2. No	____	____	57.8
3. Don't know	____	____	3.0
C. If the woman's health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy?			
1. Yes	____	____	88.3
2. No	____	____	9.1
3. Don't know	____	____	2.3
D. If the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?			
1. Yes	____	____	45.4
2. No	____	____	50.5
3 Don't know	____	____	3.9
E. If she becomes pregnant as a result of rape?			
1. Yes	____	____	80.4
2. No	____	____	16.3
3. Don't know	____	____	2.9
F. If she is not married and does not want to mary the man?			
1. Yes	____	____	39.6
2. No	____	____	56.6
3. Don't know	____	____	3.6

149. What do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?

0. None	____	____	1.0
1. One	____	____	1.7
2. Two	____	____	49.1
3. Three	____	____	23.0
4. Four	____	____	12.8
5. Five	____	____	2.2
6. Six	____	____	0.9
7. Seven or more	____	____	0.5
8. As many as you want	____	____	5.5

155. There's been alot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country. If a man and a woman have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

1. Always wrong	____	____	28.5
2. Almost always wrong	____	____	11.4
3. Wrong only sometimes	____	____	19.8
4. Not wrong at all	____	____	37.7
8. Don't know	____	____	2.2

	ME	AMERICANS (%)	ACTUAL (%)
156. What is your opinion abut a married person having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner—is it always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?			
1. Always wrong	____	____	72.4
2. Amost always wrong	____	____	13.5
3. Wrong only sometimes	____	____	10.0
4. Not wrong at all	____	____	3.2
8. Don't know	____	____	.9
161. When a person has a disease that cannot be cured, do you think doctors should be allowed by alw to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his family request it?			
1. Yes	____	____	57.7
2. No	____	____	38.3
3. Don't know	____	____	3.9
162. Do you think a person has the right to end his or her own life if the person:			
A. Has an incurable disease?			
1. Yes	____	____	38.4
2. No	____	____	58.4
3. Don't know	____	____	3.2
B. Has gone bankrupt?			
1. Yes	____	____	5.5
2. No	____	____	93.8
3. Don't know	____	____	0.7
C. Has dishonored his or her family?			
1. Yes	____	____	6.3
2. No	____	____	93.2
3. Don't know	____	____	0.3
D. Is tired of living and ready to die?			
1. Yes	____	____	11.8
2. No	____	____	86.8
3. Don't know	____	____	1.1